XVII

TIME AND LIFE
CHAPTER XVII
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INTRODUCTION

The vedic thoughts on time and ritual have at times a close bearing on the vedic vision about the life-span.¹

JB (II.47) says that the life-span of man is a hundred years (sa eṣa śatāyuḥ puruṣah). In TS (I.7.6.5) is a prayer in which it is expected that one should live for a hundred winters (śatam himāḥ). Here a season stands for a year. Thus the prayer is for gaining a life of hundred years. JB (II.391) says that those who reach the end of the year reach light while living.

JUB (IV.2.1ff) considers man as the sacrifice (puruṣo vai yajñah). His first twenty-four years are the morning libation (tasya yāni caturvimiśatīr varṣāṇī tat prātassavanam) because of the connection between the morning pressing and the Gāyatrī metre which has twenty-four syllables. Similarly his next forty-four years are the noon libation (atha yāni catuṣcatvārimśatāṁ varṣāṇi tan mādhyandināṁ savanam) because the Triṣṭubh metre which has forty-four syllables is connected with the midday pressing. And since the Jagatī metre which has forty-eight syllables is connected to the third pressing therefore the next forty-eight years are the evening libation (atha yāny aṣṭācatvārimśatāṁ varṣāṇi tat triśyasavanam).
ŚB (X.2.6.7) connects life and heaven by saying that the life of a hundred years makes for heaven (lokyā śatāyutā).

GAINING LIFE

In the context of the Darśapūrṇamāsa sacrifices ŚB (I.3.5.15) says that there are three breaths in man and the recitation of the Sāmidhenī verses gives complete breathing to the sacrificer. Therefore he lives a full life. In the concluding rite of this sacrifice the sacrificer steps to the Gārhapatya fire and prays, "May my household matters be free from calamities for a hundred winters." He thereby says, "May I live a hundred years."

In the marriage rite a prayer is made by the groom "Loving, bright, with genial minds, may we see a hundred autumns, may we live a hundred autumns, may we hear a hundred autumns." Thus here the wish for a life of marital bliss of a hundred years is expressed by the groom (PārasGS I.7.2).

In the context of Pīṇḍapitṛyajña ŚB (II.4.2.6) recommends that one should eat only in the evening and the morning. Thereby one reaches the full measure of life and whatever he speaks, that is or becomes true.

In the special sacrifices for Prajāpati, the offering material used is hundred Kṛṣṇalas in weight. Thus one gets life of a hundred years (TS II.3.2.1).

Since life and health are interlinked so ŚāṅB (V.1) says that the Cāturmāsya sacrifices are sacrifices of healing. Therefore they are

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1 For āyu or āyus in the sense of the vital force and the time or duration of life see
performed in the joints of seasons, for it is in the joints of seasons that
diseases are born.\textsuperscript{2} Thus when the disease is prevented life is lengthened.

ŚB (III.1.1.2) in the context of the Soma sacrifice says, "While
choosing the place for worship, let it rise somewhat towards the south, by it
the sacrifice would go quickly to the yonder world and in this way the
sacrificer lives long." In the rite of standing near the fire and praising it, one
praises the fire in which there is a verse which means, 'Enkindling you for a
hundred winters (years)'. Thereby one gets established in a full span of life
of hundred years. Here there is a direct statement of living for a hundred
years (TS I.5.7.6). TS (I.5.9.5) too says that one who stands near the fire
while praising it gets full span of life.

In an animal sacrifice which is a part of the Soma sacrifice the line
'tayorasthuri...' is uttered, thereby it is desired that the household matters be
free from calamities for a hundred years (ŚB III.7.4.10). This is another way
of expressing the desire of a life of a hundred years.

Also in a Soma sacrifice before creeping into the Sadas one should
pay homage to the Upadraśīṛ (overseer). Agni is the seer and one submits
oneself to him and thereby obtains the whole life and does not die before the
proper time (GB II.2.19).

ŚB (IV.2.4.6f) instructs the Adhvaryu to not pour the Dhruva cup into
the Hotṛ cup during the chanting, for verily if he would do so, the sacrificer

\textsuperscript{2} cf. G.U. Thite, \textit{Sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇa-texts}, p.57; and the same, \textit{Medicine: Its
would not live through the year. He pours it during the recitation of the Śastra, thus he obtains ever continued life and thus does the sacrificer live long. The offerings to the seasons are the breaths, in the ritual of Ṛtugrahās. Thereby the breaths are placed in the sacrificer and so is his life lengthened (ŚānB XIII.9 ; cf. GB II.3.7). GB (II.3.7) adds that thereby the sacrificer also attains immortality in the world of heaven.

GB (II.3.6) says that since speech, inbreathing and outbreathing are identical with the Vaṣaṭ call, therefore these go away after every Vaṣaṭ call is uttered. The Hotṛ then addresses them with a formula, "vāgojaḥ saha ojo mayi prāṇāpānąu". Thereby the Hotṛ establishes the speech, etc. in him and gets full life and does not die before the proper time.

According to JUB (I.37.7) that part of the Gāyatra (-Sāman) unto the Pratihāra should be sung without taking breath. Thus breath is the Gāyatra (-Sāman). Verily the sacrificer thus enjoys breath and attains complete life.

In the context of Vājapeya sacrifice ŚB (V.2.2.1ff) describes that when the Sviṣṭakṛt of the Bārhaspatya pap remains yet to be offered, then the Adhvaryu brings the sacrificer some food. Whatever food he does not bring to him, let the sacrificer forswear that and not eat of it as long as he lives. Thus he does not go to the end and lives long.

In the Sautrāmaṇī sacrifice, gold weighing hundred (grains) is used. Therefore man has a life of a hundred years (ŚB XII.9.1.4). Also in the Sautrāmaṇī are three sacrificial breads offered because man's life span is divided into three parts. Thereby one obtains a full span of life. Thus by means of the sacrificial bread for Indra one gains the first part of life. By
means of the sacrificial bread for Savitṛ one gains the middle part of the life and by the means of the sacrificial bread for Varuṇa one gains the last part of life (ŚB XII.9.1.8).

In an Upanayana rite the student is mystically produced from the cosmic pairs and one who is produced in such a manner will not die before the completion of the teacher's life. This is the view of GB (I.1.33). GB (I.1.34ff) adds that during this Upanayana rite the teacher explains the first-foot of the Sāvitrī verse and thereby the teacher obtains the full life. Similar remark is made in connection with the second and third foot of the Sāvitrī verse.

In order to get long life an offering is made to the deity of the asterism on which one is born and this is to be done every year under that asterism (ĀgniGS p.52).

AGE

Age is an important aspect of time. Certain rites are to be performed at a certain age only.

ĀśvaGS (I.13.2) advises one who does not know what the Upaniṣads say about Garbhālambhana (ritual for securing conception), Purīsavāna (ritual for obtaining male child) and Anāvalobhana (ritual for preventing disturbance to the embryo), the one should give one's wife curds to eat in the third month of pregnancy, under the asterism Tiṣya after she has fasted.
Each handful of curds should have two beans and a grain of barley. Also this curds should be from the cow which has a calf of the same colour.

If the age may be counted from the time of conception then we read that the Purñsavana is to be performed in the third month of pregnancy (SatyāGS II.2.2; ŚāṅGS I.20.1; KhādGS II.2.17). GobhiGS (II.6.1) prescribes it to be done in the beginning of the third month. According to BhārGS (I.22) the Purñsavana should be performed in the third or the beginning of the fourth month of pregnancy.

In the fourth month of pregnancy is the Garbharakṣaṇa (rite for protecting the embryo) performed (ŚāṅGS I.21.1).

The Śīmantonnavayana is to be performed in the fourth month of the first pregnancy (BhārGS I.21; ĀpasGS VI.4.1; SatyāGS II.1.12; ĀśvaGS I.14.1). According to ŚāṅGS (I.22.1) the Śīmantonnavayana is performed in the seventh month of the first pregnancy. It may be done in the fourth or sixth month according to KhādGS (II.2.24) whereas GobhiGS (II.7.1f) opines that it be done in the fourth, sixth or eighth month of the first pregnancy.

On the tenth day after the birth of a child, the father names the child (PārasGS I.17.1). According to KhādGS (II.3.6) and GobhiGS (II.8.8) it one year after the birth of the child.

The child is taken out of the house to look at the sun in the fourth month after its birth (PārasGS I.17.5f).

The Annaprāśana is done at the age of six months (SatyāGS II.5.1; PārasGS I.19.1; ĀśvaGS I.16.1; ŚāṅGS I.27.1).
The Caula (tonsure of the head) should be done when the child is one year old (BhārGS 1.28). PārasGS (II.1.1ff) too prescribes the Cūḍākarma when the son is one year old or before the lapse of the third year. According to ĀpasGS (VI.16.3) prescribes the Caula to be done at the age of three (cf. SatyāGS II.6.1; ĀśvaGS I.17.1; KhādGS II.3.16; GobhiGS II.9.1). According to ŚāṅGS (I.28.1) the Cūḍākarma of a Brahmin boy is to be done after one year or in the third year. The tonsure of a Kṣatriya boy is to be done in the fifth year and that of a Vaiśya boy in the seventh year.

According to ĀpasGS (IV.10.2ff) the proper age for initiation for each of the Varṇas is different. It says that the Brahmin should be initiated in the eighth year after conception, a Kṣatriya in the eleventh year after conception and a Vaiśya twelfth year after conception (cf. GobhiGS II.10.1ff). SatyāGS (I.1.2ff) prescribes the age of seven years for a Brahmin, eleven for a Rājanya and twelve for a Vaiśya. According to PārasGS (II.2.1ff) and a Brahmin should be initiated when he is eight years old or in the eighth year after conception. A Kṣatriya when he is eleven years and a Vaiśya when he is twelve years (cf. ĀśvaGS I.19.1ff). According to ŚāṅGS (II.1.1ff) the Brahmin should be initiated in the eighth year or in the tenth year after conception. A Kṣatriya should be initiated in the eleventh year after conception and a Vaiśya in the twelfth year after conception. KhādGS (II.4.1ff) recommends the initiation to be done at the age of eight for a Brahmin, eleven for a Kṣatriya and twelve for a Vaiśya.

The time for initiation has not passed until the sixteenth year for a Brahmin, the twenty-second year for a Kṣatriya and the twenty-fourth year
for a Vaiśya (PārasGS II.5.36ff; ĀśvaGS I.19.5ff; ŚāṅGS II.1.6ff; KhādGS II.4.2ff; GobhiGS II.10.1ff).

ĀpasGS (VI.16.12) says that the Godāna ceremony (i.e. the ceremony of shaving beard for the first time) is to be performed at the age of sixteen (cf. SatyāGS II.6.16; PārasGS II.1.3; ĀśvaGS I.18.1f; GobhiGS III.1.1). According to ŚāṅGS (I.28.20) the Godāna ceremony is to be performed in the sixteenth or in the eighteenth year.

LIFE-SPAN OF MAN AND MEASUREMENT OF RITUAL DETAILS

Life-span is also a time factor on which ritual details are determined. For example, the Hotṛ recites one hundred verses in the morning litany because man has a hundred years of life and one gets that much life thereby (ŚāṅB XI.7; MS IV.5.3).

In the offerings called Annahomas connected with the Aśvamedha sacrifice, one hundred and one offerings are made, for a man has a life of hundred years and his own self is the hundred and first (ŚB XIII.2.1.6). Also in the Aśvamedha sacrifice are seized a hundred beasts as the life-span of man is a hundred years (ŚB XIII.2.5.3). Also the wives of the sacrificer weave one hundred and one pearls in the hair of the sacrificial horse as the life-span of man is hundred years and his own self is the hundred and first (ŚB XIII.2.6.8). In the Aśvamedha, silver is the fee of the priests. It weighs a hundred (grains), for man has a life of hundred years (ŚB XIII.4.2.10).
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According to ŚB (XIII.4.2.13) however gold is the fee of the priests and it weighs a hundred (grains). Reference has been already made to the hundred grains weight of gold in the Sautrāmaṇī (ŚB XII.7.2.13).

IMMORTALITY AND TIME

ŚB (X.1.5.4) mentions the powers conferred by the performance of sacrifices as follows: He who regularly performs the Agnihotra eats food in the evening and the morning. He who regularly performs the New and Full moon sacrifices eats food every half-month and so on. Here gaining time and thereby life is equated to gaining food. In the end it is said that he who offers Soma sacrifice once a year eats food every hundred years or abstains therefrom; for a hundred years is as much as immortality, unending and everlasting and for him who knows this there shall be immortality, unending and everlasting and whatever he touches with a reed shall be for him immortal, unending and everlasting (ŚB X.1.5.4). Here living a life of hundred years is itself considered as being immortal. TMB (XXII.12.2f) says that this is man's immortality that he reaches the full term of life and that he becomes wealthier. He who knows this reaches the normal term of life and becomes wealthy (etadvāva manusyasyāmṛtatvam yat sarvamāyureti vasiyān bhavati) (see also TMB XXIII.12.3f).³

ŚB (X.1.4.8) narrates how Prajāpati became immortal and also how a sacrificer can make himself immortal. In the fire-altar there are six layers
each of bricks and earth. That makes twelve. The year has twelve months
and Agni is the year. So great as Agni is as great as is his measurement with
so much did Prajāpati make his body uniformly undecaying and immortal
and in the like manner does the sacrificer make his body uniformly
undecaying and immortal. According to ŚB (X.2.6.7) whosoever builds one-
hundred-and-one-fold altar or whosoever lives a hundred years, he indeed
obtains immortality (ya evaikaśatavidhāṁ vidhatte, yo vā śataṁ varṣāṇi
jīvati, sa haivaitadamṛtamāṇputi).

Gold is immortal life (amṛtaṁ hyāyurhiranyam). This is the view of
ŚB (V.1.5.28). In the context of Soma sacrifice TS (III.2.6.3) says that if the
speckled ghee (i.e. mixture of curds and ghee) falls one has to take it again
after placing gold in the ladle. This gold is of hundred measures and is
identical with immortality. Thereby man gets a hundred years of life.

During the performance of the Vājapeya sacrifice, at the time of the
midday pressing the sacrificer presents the honey cup to the Brahman priest
together with a golden vessel. In presenting it to the Brahman priest, he
imbues himself with immortal life, for gold is immortal life (ŚB V.1.5.28).

Also in a Soma sacrifice, after the Aṇīśu cup is drawn, the Adhvaryu
breaths over gold measuring hundred Krṣṇalas in weight. Explaining this TS
(VI.6.10.2) says that gold is immortality, breath is life, verily with life he
quickens immortality.

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3 For Immortality as a prolongation of well-constructed life see L. Silburn, Instant et
Cause, p.3.
In the Rājasūya sacrifice, at the time of sprinkling of water on the sacrificer-king, two strainers with gold threads woven in them are used for the sake of purifying the water, since gold is immortal life. That immortal life is thus laid into these waters (ŚB V.3.5.15). Also in the Rājasūya, a gold plate is placed below the king’s foot and upon his head. Gold being immortal life, the Adhvaryu thus encloses him on both sides with immortal life (ŚB V.4.1.12ff).

On the Upavasatha day the Yajamāna should fast. Thereby he bestows immortality on his own self (ŚB IX.5.1.6ff).

DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

ŚB (X.2.6.8) explains the relation between age and the various time factors, as follows: Those who pass away in the years below twenty are consigned to the days and nights as their world; those who pass away in the years above twenty and below forty are consigned to the half-moons; those who pass away in the years above forty and below sixty are consigned to the months; those who pass away above sixty and below eighty are consigned to the seasons; those who pass away above eighty and below hundred are consigned to the year and he alone who lives a hundred years or more attains to that immortal life.

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In the beginning there was no year, then it was produced from death when death desired to have some one second. By his mind he entered into the union with speech and the seed which was produced became the year (ŚB X.6.5.4). From this we learn that time was created from death. JB (II.419) says that just as at the navel of the chariot the spokes are fixed, in the same way deaths are fixed in the year.

JB (II.350) identifies death with the year (saṁvatsaro mṛtyuḥ).

According to ŚB (X.4.3.1) year doubtless is the same as death, for Prajāpati by means of day and night destroys the life of mortal beings and then they die. Therefore the year is the same as death and whosoever knows this year to be death, the year does not destroy his life by means of day and night, before old age and he attains the full extent of life (cp. ŚB X.4.3.2).

JB (I.246) too identifies the year with death and declares the seasons to be mouths of death. It further says that one who knows this does not die unseasonally and is born in the seasons along with progeny and cattle. In JB (I.247) it is said that only Bṛhatī metre can combat with the mouths of death. In a Soma sacrifice there are six Bahiṣpavamāna verses and thereby one closes the mouths of seasons i.e. death.

One who knows how to connect the body in the days and nights, half-month-wise, season-wise and year-wise crosses over that death which is in heaven and does not die again (JB I.252).

In the context of the Cāturmāṣya sacrifices TB (I.4.10.10) says that the performer of these sacrifices goes to the seasons while living and if he dies in spring he becomes spring, if he dies in summer he becomes summer
and so on. Thus in death the performer becomes a season and goes to a year. Since year is identical with Prajāpati, the performer then becomes Prajāpati.

CONCLUSION

The life-span of man too is a significant time-determining factor. We often come across references of a desire for living for a hundred winters where the winter stands for the number of years. Thus often a shorter part of time is used to indicate a larger part of time. The complete life-span of man is mostly of hundred years and sometimes of hundred and one years.

The instances we read about gaining a certain time factor indicate the gaining of longer life; but there are also some cases where there is also a direct reference to the gaining of life. Also since life and health are closely connected we also read about the desire to prevent disease and thereby lengthen life.

Age which is the way to measure life too is significant. Certain rites are to be performed at a certain age only.

The measurement of ritual details is based on the life-span of man. Moreover the life-span is also said to be based on the details in the ritual.

Some texts equate the life of hundred years to immortality which is unending and everlasting. Immortality for them is reaching a normal term of life. This immortality can be achieved through rituals. Also gold represents immortal life and is therefore often used in sacrifices. In the context of ritual and time we may come across many references to death too. Year was
created from death according to some texts and death is also identical with the year. Some Brāhmaṇa-texts opine that in death the performer becomes a season and goes to the year.